

Reading Response #3

Reference:

Connors, Neila, (2000). *If you don't feed the Teachers They Eat the Students! Guide to Success for Administrators and Teachers.*

Green, Reginald. (2009). *Practicing the Art of Leadership.* (3ed.)

Practicing the art of Leadership by Reginald Green is a book that explains leadership theories based on the ISLLC standards and makes connections to the type of ethic value the theory follows. This book wants to make sure that leaders realize how important it is to be an efficient leader and be held accountable for the achievement of the students (Green, 2009, p. 1).

The chapter that I enjoyed reading in this book was chapter four. It focuses on the theory of "Enhancing Leadership Effectiveness through Communication." I liked how the chapter begins with a quote from Guanrino that says, "In the area of leadership, there is no talent more essential than one's ability to communicate (Green, 2009, p. 101)" With that strong beginning it continues to discuss the qualities that an effective leader should have to be the best communicator. The importance of an effective leader is to be "the glue that holds it together (Green, 2009, p. 104)." They need to be efficient at facilitating, advocating, ensuring, collaborating, promoting, and influencing stakeholders. A leader must be able to transmit messages clearly and be able to receive, monitor and seek them. There are two types of ways that communication can be processed. The first way is through verbal communication like face-to-face or a telephone conversations and the other way is through nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is done though body language (Green, 2009, p. 104). Another important idea that a leader needs to be aware of is who receives these messages. The receiver gives meaning to the message based on their background, knowledge, experience, values, and prior observations (Green, 2009, p. 105). That is why it is important to be an active listener and be able ask questions to clarify what the leader wants to be accomplished.

In the theory of communication there are many components that need to be followed and it made me second-guess my ability to effectively communicate. As a principle, I will need to understand that there are different levels of communication and how to distinguish when the

upward, diagonal, or horizontal approach is best appropriate for the situation (Green, 2009, p.109). It is amazing that subconsciously most people realize that their communication skills change based on who the person is communicating with but I never knew how precise communication had to be in order to be a leader. I also need to be aware of the effective ways to break down communication barriers. Green says that there are six ways to improve communication. They are: 1) establishing effective interpersonal relationships, 2) managing position powers, 3) acquiring feedback, 4) being active listeners, 5) displaying empathy, and 6) understanding the ethics of conversation (p. 113). By the leader understanding this they can develop confidence and avoid unexpected problems. The leader is the one who gets to influence the type of school climate that they want in the building (Green, 2009, p. 113). I feel that now that I am aware of all these factors that go into communicating well, I could rise to the occasion but it will take some practice.

While reading this chapter I felt that communication connects to English Language Learners (ELL) ELL's are improving their English skills to be able to speak fluently in English. In doing so they may come across difficulties because sometimes their mind is over processing and it may be a struggle for the receiver of the message to understand the meaning. Also, based on where a person lives words may have different meanings causing a problem in semantics or lack of understanding. Therefore, it is important for the person who is sending the message to be aware of these concerns and find other ways of communicating. For people who know two languages, there is a lot of processing going on inside their minds and when words have different meaning it can get confusing. That is why a leader should know how to listen for meaning and check to make sure both people know what the main point of the conversation is about (Green, 2009, p. 106). An example, I have of this is when I take my clothes in to be dry cleaned and the woman behind the counter has a different native language than English. When I ask her to sew on a button, I make sure that she shows me what she will be doing and we both agree through verbal and nonverbal communication. This makes her feel like she is serving the customer and I can leave feeling like the button will be put on correctly. It is important for ELL's to make sure that communication is done through many different ways to make conversations meaningful and understandable.

There is another way that communication connects to ELL learners. If a teacher is teaching ELL students it is important that they know how to effectively communicate with the general education teachers. If there is a lack of communication then the child is not necessarily having his/her needs met. Most of the time in my experiences, I have daily communication with ELL teachers because I want to make sure that I am doing everything in the general education room that I can to best serve that child that may be struggling with learning English. This relates to the concept of communication networks to help build successful teams, which Green discusses on page 111. Communication is all around us when dealing with children.

Green's text is so interesting that I found it exciting to make connections with other information that I have read during this program. As a leader there are many qualities that a person should have to be effective in their position. However, one of the most important traits is to be a strong communicator. While reading the Connors book, If You Don't Feed the Teachers, Eat the Students, it discusses the importance of having the skills to communicate well. The first area that Connors describes and supports the idea of communication is on page 36 when it discusses the concept of a leader effectively connecting to parents and the community. It is important to inform and involve the community to have a supportive partnership to make the schools a success for the students. Connors also mentions later in the book how it is extremely important to over communicate and use all the ways and means for which you know how to communicate (Connors, 2000, p. 134). Connors fully supports the theory discussed in Greens book. However, Green went into more specifics of the theory to make a person truly understand the importance of communication. This connection reassures me that I have to make communication a top priority for when I become a leader of a school building. I can start working on my communication skills now to become better prepared.

There are two standards that connect to this chapter. They are standard 1 and standard 2. Standard 1 has the most focus on communication because "this standard requires school leaders to be able to develop, articulate, implement, and provide stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community." This gives the people of the school the sense of direction and can uphold that vision. Standard 2 has the "leaders transmit messages to advocate, nurture, delegate responsibility and assist followers in developing their potential." While doing this they also make sure that the school culture and instructional programs are

conducive to the students learning and the professional growth for their staff. These standards require the school leader to facilitate, advocate, ensure, collaborate, promote, and influence stakeholders (Green, 2009, p. 104).

The part that meant something to me when I was reading was when Green says, “To be effective communicators, leaders must sustain a collaborative position displaying acts of caring about what the other person says, without seeking to either fix the situation or to discord or discount it (p. 116).” This to me sums up how communication can help when working with people that have higher positions than you, when working with the people that work below you like your faculty, and the community. Leaders wear different hats and I never knew that communicating could also use that same analogy. Communicating is like wearing different hats. You can have a wide variety of conversations with people but depending on the person will depend on which hat you are wearing. It is amazing how you can start to reflect on the type of communicator you are after reading Green’s chapter on the theory of communication.

Questions:

- 1) Marla you mentioned to us how in class how it is important to know which pair of shoes to have on, so how does one person learn how to distinguish between the different ways of communicating making sure that they follow the barriers of communication?
- 2) What does a leader do to help them remember what they said to one group of people versus another group of people to make sure that the same message is conveyed?
- 3) How did you know that you were using your communication skills to the fullest?